1	2	3
Trinidad & Tobago 1991 Warsaw 1988	Construction of Cultural Centre Construction of Chancery and Residences	Financial approval obtained in May 2003. Revised drawings being finalised by local architect. Contract signed with M/s Sachdeva Eggleston as Architects. Financial proposal being processed in consultation with competent authorities.

Joint working group to counter terrorism

950. SHRI RAMA MUNI REDDY SIRIGIREDDY: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that India and Tajikistan have agreed to set up a joint working group to counter terrorism; and

(b) if so, the details of the agreement?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI RAO INDERJIT SINGH): (a) and (b) India and Tajikistan signed a Memorandum of Understanding on January 30,2003 for setting up a Joint Working Group on Combating International Terrorism. The Agreement provides a framework for counter terrorism cooperation between the two countries including, *inter-alia,* by way of sharing of information and experience, cooperation in preventing terrorist financing, drug trafficking and organised crime as also through capacity building.

Passports issued by RPO, Bangalore

951. SHRI K.B. KRISHNA MURTHY: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) the number of passports newly issued in Karnataka by the Passport Office, Bangalore from January to December, 2003;

(b) the number of passport applications pending, till date, in the above office;

(c) whether Government are aware that a large number of people simply take passports but not utilising it; and

(d) if so, the steps proposed to be taken to curb the number of such persons?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI E. AHAMMED): (a) Passport Office Bangalore issued 1,52,986 passports from January to December, 2003.

(b) A total of 4,494 passport applications were pending in Passport Office Banlgalore as on 09.07.2004.

(c) Yes.

(d) Irrespective of whether a person utilises the passport or not, the passports are issued on the basis of submission of required documentation and receipt of clear police verification report.

Prisoners of War in Pakistani Jails

†952. SHRIMATI KUM KUM RAI: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) the number of Indian prisoners in Pakistani's jails;

(b) the number of Prisoners of War out of them;

(c) the number of Prisoners of War out of them who have not been released so far despite completion of their sentence; and

(d) what measures Government are taking to get them released?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI E. AHAMMED): (a) to (d) As per available information, a large number of Indian prisoners, including 930 civilians, 407 fishermen, 54 Prisoners of War, and 2 missing Indian defence personnel are presently believed to be in Pakistan's custody.

Pakistan has never acknowledged the presence of Indian Prisoners of War in their custody.

Government, through diplomatic channels, have been consistently taking up the matter with Pakistan. The issue was also taken up during the Foreign Secretary level talks between India and Pakistan held in New Delhi on June 27-28, 2004.

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.